



1300 I Street, NW, Suite 400 West  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone 202 515-2527  
Fax 202 336-7922  
donna.m.epps@verizon.com

March 31, 2010

**Ex Parte**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Petitions for Rulemaking and Clarification Regarding the Commission's Rules  
Applicable to Retirement of Copper Loops and Copper Subloops, RM-11358;  
Cbeeyond, Inc. Petition for Expedited Rulemaking to Require Unbundling of Hybrid,  
FTTH, and FTTC Loops Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 251(c)(3) of the Act, WC Docket No.  
09-223**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Yesterday, William Johnson and the undersigned of Verizon met with Christine Kurth of Commissioner McDowell's office to discuss why the FCC should continue to encourage more widespread availability of next-generation broadband networks for consumers by maintaining its long-standing policies allowing the retirement of duplicative copper facilities (subject to network disclosure requirements) following the deployment of all-fiber networks. The discussion was consistent with the attached ex parte letter, which Verizon filed on February 12, 2010. In particular, we explained that proposals to prohibit retirement of duplicative copper facilities would harm the business case for investment in fiber, be inefficient and substantially increase costs – costs ultimately borne by consumers. Moreover, any backtracking on these rules at this time would come late in the game, after companies have invested tens of billions of dollars in fiber infrastructure in express reliance upon the Commission's policy, while also standing as a direct obstacle to the Commission's longstanding broadband goals by discouraging the substantial, future investments needed for widespread availability of next-generation broadband facilities.

The Commission's current policies are designed to facilitate — and, indeed, have facilitated — investment in cutting-edge broadband infrastructure. The changes to the existing copper-retirement rules that some seek, in contrast, would entrench the legacy copper network at the expense of next-generation facilities. Other companies would have little incentive to deploy their own fiber facilities as long as they are guaranteed indefinite access to the copper network. And the companies deploying fiber would have less incentive to make new investments in fiber networks. Moreover, we discussed why the benefits of fiber deployment – and, in turn the business case for making such investments in the first place – would be greatly diminished if the company

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deploying the fiber was also required to bear the significant expense associated with maintaining a redundant and less-efficient copper network solely for the benefit of its competitors.

Additionally, in the meeting, we urged the Commission to reject Cbeyond's Petition for Expedited Rulemaking to Require Unbundling of Hybrid, FTTH and FTTC Loops. We explained that the Commission should not reverse seven years of settled policy by taking the radical step of imposing unbundling mandates on next-generation broadband infrastructure. Our comments were consistent with Verizon's February 19, 2010 ex parte, and the handouts in Attachment 2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Epps". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Attachments

cc: Christine Kurth

# **ATTACHMENT 1**



1300 I Street, NW, Suite 400 West  
Washington, DC 20005

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Fax 202 336-7922  
donna.m.epps@verizon.com

February 12, 2010

**Ex Parte**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: National Broadband Plan, GN Docket No. 09-51**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As the Commission concludes its work on the National Broadband Plan, it is important for the focus to remain on the Plan's core objectives of promoting the continued deployment and adoption of broadband. In particular, the Commission should ensure that the Plan preserves providers' incentives to continue the existing massive, on-going investment in broadband deployment. However, some continue to urge the Commission to take steps that would undermine those incentives and hamper those efforts. In particular, some propose that the Commission use the Plan to reverse its current policy that allows companies to retire copper facilities (subject to the Commission's network disclosure requirements) where they have deployed fiber, including new fiber-to-the-premises ("FTTP") lines.<sup>1</sup> Those proposals — which would change the rules late in the game, after companies have invested tens of billions of dollars in fiber infrastructure in express reliance upon the Commission's policy — stand as a direct obstacle to the Commission's longstanding goal of providing high-speed broadband access to all Americans over next-generation broadband facilities.

Since the Commission's decisions eliminating unbundling requirements for FTTP and refusing to restrict the ability of companies deploying fiber facilities to retire redundant copper network facilities, Verizon alone has committed more than \$23 billion in investment to its all-fiber FiOS network, which currently offers up to 50 Mbps download speeds — as well as plans offering small businesses up to 35 Mbps symmetrical upload and download speeds — to roughly 15.4 million premises. That all-fiber network will ultimately reach millions of additional premises and support much higher broadband speeds, thus enabling application developers to create, and customers to enjoy, new applications and services that take advantage of these ever

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<sup>1</sup> See Letter from William A. Haas, PAETEC, to Marlene H. Dortch, GN Dockets No. 09-47 et al. (filed Dec. 6, 2009); Letter from Regina M. Keeney, Attorney for XO Communications to Marlene H. Dortch, GN Docket Nos. 09-47 et al. (filed Jan. 29, 2010).

increasing broadband speeds. In making this massive investment, Verizon directly relied upon the Commission's decisions. Indeed, the ability to retire copper plant and equipment when it makes economic sense to do so and to avoid the cost of maintaining redundant facilities was — and remains — *critical* to the business case for Verizon's investment in its next-generation FTTP network.

If the Commission were to reverse its long-standing refusal to limit the retirement of duplicative copper facilities for only one category of providers, as some have urged, it would artificially skew competition in the broadband marketplace by imposing a unique — and significant — burden on incumbent LECs, alone among competing broadband providers. Cable operators, fixed and mobile wireless providers, facilities-based CLECs, satellite providers, and other providers could all focus on exactly one task — bringing the best possible broadband services to their customers. Incumbent LECs, in contrast, would be forced to maintain a costly, redundant, legacy network — which they would not be using for their own retail operations — in addition to their next-generation fiber facilities.

Moreover, the benefits of fiber deployment — and, in turn, the business case for making such investments in the first place — would be greatly diminished if the company deploying the fiber was also required to bear the significant costs associated with maintaining a redundant and less-efficient copper network solely for the benefit of its competitors. This would not be as simple as just leaving copper lines in the ground. In addition to the lines themselves, Verizon and other companies deploying fiber would be forced to maintain related network equipment such as load coils, terminals, service wires, pedestals, and feeder distribution interface cabinets. They would also have to maintain legacy operations systems for inventory, service orders, cost assignment, and wholesale billing, even though, in Verizon's case at least, none of those systems is used with its next-generation FiOS network. Forcing companies to maintain copper facilities after they deployed fiber would be like requiring a factory to continue operating its old machines after it purchased new, state-of-the-art equipment. Such a rule would be wasteful and inefficient, and would create a substantial disincentive to investing in new technologies in the first place, at a time when the Commission seeks to encourage *greater* investment in next-generation broadband networks. And, of course, the added costs imposed by maintaining the duplicate networks and systems beyond when it makes business sense to do so ultimately would be borne by consumers.

In addition, by reducing providers' incentives to invest in fiber networks, these added costs would ultimately harm consumers and undermine the Commission's broadband goals. Regardless of any improvements in technology using legacy copper facilities, it remains the case that copper will never offer the capacity or robustness of fiber, both because of copper's inherent limitations and because real-world copper facilities cannot duplicate speeds that are reached in laboratory experiments. Fiber networks are faster, more efficient, and more reliable than the legacy copper network. For example, fiber lines require no mid-span equipment or electronics (*e.g.*, repeaters, terminals, remotes, etc.), which means that they are cheaper to maintain and have fewer potential points of failure than copper lines. Fiber lines are also more durable and require fewer repairs. For example, as Verizon has previously explained, the rate of maintenance

dispatches in 2007 was *eighty percent* lower for FiOS lines than for copper lines. When fiber is deployed, consumers gain faster speeds and more reliable service, and carriers gain a more efficient, greener network that is much easier to operate and maintain. A requirement on one class of providers to maintain redundant copper facilities will mean less fiber overall, and less access to the advanced services that fiber enables, harming residential and small-business consumers alike.

Finally, some have urged the Commission to alter its rules to allow companies to retire copper facilities only where they physically remove the copper wires from the ground, or to require them to sell retired copper facilities. Such proposals simply seek to accomplish indirectly what the Commission has refused to do directly — namely, prohibit copper retirement, as a practical matter — by making retirement more expensive than maintaining the duplicative facilities. Most existing copper wire is either buried in the ground or lashed to other cables on telephone poles; a requirement that carriers physically remove this wire would impose such high costs that it would be the functional equivalent of a ban on retirement. Similarly, forcing companies to sell retired copper facilities would impose costs similar to those posed by unbundling mandates. There would be no clear or administrable way to price retired copper facilities and — given that copper lines run through central offices — companies would still have to maintain separate systems for operations, interconnection, billing, and account management.

In sum, the Commission's current policies are designed to facilitate — and, indeed, *have* facilitated — investment in cutting-edge broadband infrastructure. The changes to the existing copper-retirement rules that some seek, in contrast, would entrench the legacy network at the expense of next-generation facilities. Other companies would have little incentive to deploy their own fiber facilities as long as they are guaranteed indefinite access to the copper network. And the companies deploying fiber would have less incentive to make new investments in fiber networks, while such a rule change would also arbitrarily reduce the value of past investments made in reliance on the Commission's decision not to prohibit copper retirement. Consistent with the Commission's goal of encouraging broadband investment and innovation in order to increase the capabilities of our Nation's broadband infrastructure, the Commission should reject calls to reverse course on its long-standing decision not to restrict the ability to retire redundant copper facilities. Such a reversal would only increase the costs and decrease the incentives to deploy new fiber facilities, thereby harming consumers and undermining the core goals of the Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donna Epps". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D".

## **ATTACHMENT 2**



## **Selected Quotes from Cable Companies, Fixed Wireless Providers and CLECs Regarding the Small and Medium Business Markets**

### **Cable Providers**

#### **Comcast**

Michael Angelakis, EVP, CFO – transcript of 4Q 2009 earnings call on 2-3-10

- “Business services [have] experienced real momentum over the past year, with revenue increasing 48% to \$828 million for 2009. In 2010, we are again enthusiastic about business services’ prospects and expect this momentum to continue as we begin to expand our services to medium-sized businesses and call backhaul.”

Steve Burke, COO - transcript of 4Q 2009 earnings call on 2-3-10

- “[W]e are continuing to invest in future growth. In business services, we continue to have real success in the small end of the business market, with a lot of room for growth.”

Michael Angelakis, EVP, CFO – transcript of Credit Suisse Group Global Media and Communications Conference on 3-9-10

- In response to a question about how small businesses are often neglected by the incoming telcos: “We think we have a better product. And we think we can do it more economical for our customer bases. So, we can walk into a relatively small office and offer multi-line phones, which are more economical than our competitors’. We can offer a high-speed data product that replaces a DSL or ISDN line for again, more economical, so better product, lower cost.”

#### **Cox**

Cox Targets \$2B in Biz Revenues 12-3-09 *Light Reading’s Digital Cable News*

Today, about 80 percent of its commercial customers have fewer than 20 workers, with 65 percent of revenues coming from that group. [Phil Meeks, VP] said “Cox is also expanding its capabilities to go after businesses with 20-99 workers aggressively with symmetric DOCSIS Internet services and other offerings targeted to larger commercial customers.”



## **Time Warner Cable**

**Landel Hobbs – COO** transcript of 4Q 2009 earnings call on 1-28-10

- “Sure. First of all I'm really happy with the growth roughly north of 14% in the fourth quarter and 15.5% for the year, particularly in the face of what you mentioned, in a tough economic environment out there. Remember, our sweet spot is the small businesses, actually very small businesses who have been particularly hard hit by the economy. Having seen some increase in churn on that front. Having said that, as we indicated in our prepared remarks, we're going to increase the growth rate of north of 20% next year, and I'm happy to say as I look at the tail end of the fourth quarter moving into the first, I'm seeing my revenue growth improve.

## **TWC's new Ethernet service rolls into New York City – 10-23-08**

**CedMagazine.com** <http://www.cedmagazine.com/TWC-Ethernet-New-York-City.aspx>

Earlier this week, Time Warner Cable introduced its new “Business Class Ethernet” service to small- and medium-size businesses (SMBs) in its New York City footprint.

“Business Class Ethernet changes the game. Its widespread availability on cable HFC networks means that SMBs now have a cost-effective, multi-megabit alternative to telco T1 and Frame Relay data services. This service will be a real competitive differentiator for Time Warner Cable as it continues to grow its commercial business.”

## **Cablevision**

**Tom Rutledge –COO**, transcript of 4Q 2009 earnings call on 2-25-10

- “Yes, well, with small business, [as} we move up market, the number of lines per customer continue to increase and the -- we continue to penetrate the market place. [W]e did add more than a quarter of a million lines last year, so you can see that in addition to our customer count, we are growing our lines per customer, which is essentially the impact that small business is having on our operating business. So that business continues to look good.”
- “In some ways the fact that we have a superior product at a lower price than our competitors in a tumultuous time gives us an advantage. It is a marketplace that -- people don't likely change their telecommunication provider when you are a business and we are actually doing quite well at getting people to do that. So I am optimistic that that business will continue to grow and that as the economy improves, we will continue to improve with it.”

## **Fixed Wireless**

### **Covad**

Covad Wireless provides service to over 3,500 corporate accounts in the largest metropolitan markets in California, including the San Francisco Bay area, the greater Los Angeles area, and Orange County, as well as Las Vegas, Nevada and the Chicago area. The company's service area encompasses over 220 cities across more than 3,000 square miles and covers more than 50,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in population centers that include more than 25 million households.

<http://www.covadwireless.com/about.html> visited 3-17-10

Covad Wireless Super-T Business Internet Access is the perfect choice for mission critical business applications and offices of any size. Our Covad Wireless Super-T service provides upload and download speeds between 768 Kbps up to 6 Mbps -- that's up to four times the bandwidth of a conventional land line T1!

<http://www.covadwireless.com/services.html> visited 3-17-10

### **Airband**

<http://www.airband.com/press-releases/airband-communication-launches-full-portfolio-of-bundled-voice/> March 17, 2010 press release.

- Airband Communications, Inc., the industry's leading fixed-wireless company for businesses in the U.S., today launched a new suite of bundled services that gives small-to-midsize businesses (SMBs) enterprise-class voice and data services at costs well below what traditional providers can offer. The full set of products can address the voice and data needs of virtually every business in Airband markets.
- "Business customers can now fully benefit from Airband's fixed-wireless advantage. The quality of service (QoS) of our IP-based, last-mile network is on par with, and in many cases is better than the aging wired infrastructure of traditional telecom providers," said Jim DaBramo, executive vice president of field operations at Airband. "Airband is committed to providing businesses, especially SMBs, with enterprise-class voice and data services that help boost their operational and financial performance. We have tilted the playing field toward SMBs by giving them options in voice and data services that they may not have today while meeting their need to reduce monthly telecom costs."

## **CLECs**

### **Covad**

Since 1997, Covad has been delivering broadband Internet access designed especially for small and mid-sized businesses. As a leading service provider of DSL, Business Ethernet, T1 and DS3, Covad lets you choose an Internet solution that balances competitive pricing with the performance, features, and room to grow that your business needs.

<http://www.covad.com/web/services/index.html>

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### **MegaPath**

MegaPath has focused on the SMB and brought to market products and services in a format that can be easily managed by a company with limited IT resources. We have found that SMBs only deploy technology to solve real business problems; faster transactions, cashless transactions or real-time information access for pricing, inventory management, gift/loyalty programs or e-learning. MegaPath augments the SMB's IT staff in building an IP broadband wide area network that can provide the required connectivity and security to handle these applications.

<http://www.megapath.com/solutions/smb/#ixzz0iSatZEgA> visited 3-17-10



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| Packages  | Features  | Maximum Connection Speed | Activation Fee       | Modem                         | Price per Month     |
|---|---|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Premium</b>  |   |                          |                      |                               |                     |
| <b>7.1 Mbps</b><br>Top connection speeds with premium email and Web space features.     | 20 MB of Web space<br>Up to 10 verizon.net email boxes or three domain names<br>Free WiFi<br>One free license for Verizon Internet Security Suite | Up to 7.1 M/768K         | <b>Up to \$99.99</b> | <b>FREE with online order</b> | \$79.99 or \$99.99* |
| <b>3 Mbps</b><br>For your growing business, a fast, full-featured broadband connection. | 20 MB of Web space<br>Up to 10 verizon.net email boxes or three domain names  | Up to 3.0M/768K          | <b>Up to \$99.99</b> | <b>FREE with online order</b> | \$59.99             |

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Free WiFi  
One free license  
for Verizon  
Internet Security  
Suite

## Basic

|   |   |                    |                      |   |                |
|---|---|--------------------|----------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>3 Mbps</b><br>A high-speed<br>connection at a great<br>value | Up to 10<br>verizon.net email<br>boxes<br>Free WiFi | Up to<br>3 0M/768K | <b>Up to \$99.99</b> | <b>FREE<br/>with<br/>online<br/>order</b> | <b>\$42.99</b> |
| <b>1 Mbps</b><br>Big savings on a<br>reliable connection.       | Up to 10<br>verizon.net email<br>boxes<br>Free WiFi | Up to<br>1 0M/384K | <b>Up to \$99.99</b> | <b>FREE<br/>with<br/>online<br/>order</b> | <b>\$29.99</b> |

\* Prices vary by state

\$79.99 package is offered in CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, WV

\$99.99 package is offered in CA, FL, ID, IL, IN, MI, NC, NV, OH, OR, PA, SC, TX, VA, WA, WI

[Product Availability](#)

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Subject to Customer Agreement, service plan & credit approval. Up to \$99.99 activation fee, up to \$149 early termination fee, eligibility restrictions, equipment fees, taxes and other charges may apply. Offers and services not available everywhere. Uninterrupted service not guaranteed. Speeds may vary. Maximum speed subject to confirmation by Verizon. Verizon HSI for Business Up to 3Mbps/768Kbps Service will be provisioned at maximum connection speeds of up to 3M/768K, up to 1.5M/384K, up to 1M/384K or up to 768K/128K according to Verizon's standard loop qualification guidelines. Verizon HSI for Business Up to 7 1Mbps/768Kbps Service will be provisioned at maximum connection speeds of up to 7 1M/768K, up to 5M/768K or up to 3M/768K according to Verizon's standard loop qualification guidelines. In general, where only Frame Relay network is available, or where customer loop length on ATM network is longer than 12Kft, customer will be provisioned at maximum connection speeds of up to 768K/128K. Verizon Wi-Fi available in select areas with qualifying packages. Software limitations and other terms apply. Visit business.verizon.net/wifi for details. ©2010 Verizon. Offer valid 1/17/10-4/17/10

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